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RUEHUM/AMEMBASSY ULAANBAATAR IMMEDIATE 1807
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RUEHIN/AIT TAIPEI IMMEDIATE 3261
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 05 SEOUL 000642

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [MARR](#) [MASS](#) [EAID](#) [AF](#) [PK](#) [KS](#)

SUBJECT: PRESIDENT LEE/ADVISORS TALK ROK ASSISTANCE TO
AFGHANISTAN/PAKISTAN WITH SRAP HOLBROOKE

REF: A. SEOUL 570

[B](#). SEOUL 591

[C](#). SEOUL 607

[D](#). SECSTATE 31102

Classified By: AMBASSADOR KATHLEEN STEPHENS. REASONS 1.4 (b),(d).

[1](#). (C) SUMMARY: Ambassador Richard Holbrooke, Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan (SRAP), met on April 16 in Seoul with ROK President Lee Myung-bak, NSA Kim Sung-hwan, and FM Yu Myung-hwan. SRAP Holbrooke explained the Obama Administration's new strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan to the ROKG leadership. They, in turn, explained South Korea's 2009 assistance plans for Afghanistan, and the ROK pledge FM Yu would be making at the April 17 Pakistan Donors' Conference. Holbrooke informed them that the USG would not ask the ROKG to send troops to Afghanistan, but that we hoped South Korea would significantly increase its ODA to both Afghanistan and Pakistan, with particular emphasis on aid to Islamabad. President Lee and FM Yu expressed their approval for the U.S. strategy, and relief that prior pressure for troops would not continue. They offered no additional increase in police trainers, but showed interest in the agricultural and road construction elements of the plan, and described significant ROK private sector investment in improving overland links between Afghanistan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. President Lee plans to visit Uzbekistan in May. FM Yu, who will be attending the April 17

Pakistan Donors' Conference in Tokyo said he intended to pledge a combined total of USD 200 million ("with some room for more"), consisting of USD 160 in soft loans the ROK had previously pledged to Pakistan, and a new pledge of an additional USD 40 million (half soft loans/half grant aid). SRAP Holbrooke told President Lee that Korea's contribution at the donor's conference would be very important. He urged FM Yu to increase the size of the ROK pledge. President Lee said that President Obama's determination to address Pakistan and Afghanistan together with allies would ensure success, and that the ROK was ready to do what it could as an ally.

END SUMMARY

12. (SBU) On April 16, Richard Holbrooke, Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan (SRAP) met with Republic of Korea President Lee Myung-bak, National Security Advisor Kim Sung-hwan, and Foreign Minister Yu Myung-hwan on a brief stopover in Seoul. Ambassador Holbrooke explained the Obama Administration's new strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan. Senior ROKG officials outlined South Korea's 2009 assistance package for Afghanistan, and the ROK pledge the Foreign Minister would be making at the April 17 Pakistan Donors' Conference in Tokyo.

MEETING WITH THE FOREIGN MINISTER

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13. (SBU) ROK FM Yu Myung-hwan welcomed SRAP Holbrooke as an old friend of South Korea. He recalled they had first met when Holbrooke, who was then-Assistant Secretary for EAP, had accompanied President Jimmy Carter to Seoul in 1979. Yu said that at that time he was a Protocol Officer at the Blue House. They also discussed other close Korean friends. Noting that close U.S.-ROK relations have deepened in the years since, Holbrooke praised Ambassador Stephens for her knowledge of Korea and the Korean language, commenting that the U.S. had never had as well-prepared an ambassador to the ROK as we do today. The Foreign Minister agreed, adding that Koreans referred to her as "Uri Daesanim" (lit: Our Ambassador).

ROK CONTRIBUTIONS IN AFGHANISTAN

14. (C) FM Yu listened carefully as SRAP Holbrooke explained the Obama Administration's new strategy in Afghanistan and Pakistan and where we thought the ROK could best contribute. SRAP Holbrooke began by informing Yu that the USG was sensitive to the political challenges the Lee Administration faced in redeploying troops to Afghanistan and would not be making such a request (Note: The ROK had a 200 person military medical and engineering unit at Bagram from 2002-2007: Ref C). If the ROKG decided to send troops, the USG would welcome it, but that it was our assessment that would be too difficult politically for the Lee Administration. Since we were not asking for troops, the USG expected the ROKG would be freer to focus on increasing its developmental assistance to Afghanistan and Pakistan. FM Yu replied that ending the contentious internal debate in South Korea on troops for Afghanistan would "of course make things easier for the ROKG." In explaining the U.S. position, SRAP Holbrooke expressed our understanding of the trauma the previous ROK Government had endured during the 2007 hostage crisis, during which the Taliban kidnapped 23 Korean missionaries, killing two. He pointed out to FM Yu that SRAP Special Assistant McClure had played an important role in assisting the ROKG team that had been sent to Ghazni to negotiate the release of the 21 Koreans who survived. FM Yu expressed his government's deep appreciation, recalling how difficult that crisis had been for the ROKG.

15. (C) Ambassador Holbrooke went on to explain that under

the Obama Administration strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan, the United States, working with other partners around the world, intended to shift the focus of our counter-narcotics strategy from crop eradication to interdiction and arrest of drug kingpins in Afghanistan. The plan also focused heavily on development of Afghanistan's agricultural sector through cultivation of wheat, pomegranates, saffron and pistachios. Expressing his approval for the plan, FM Yu commented that Koreans believed that pomegranates had great health benefits, stating that the

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ROK could import a large quantity from Afghanistan. SRAP Holbrooke also stressed the importance of police training and road construction, urging the ROKG to consider doing more in both areas. FM Yu said nothing about police trainers, but described in detail ways the ROK was assisting in the building new transportation links between Uzbekistan and Kabul, and between Tajikistan and Kabul. He said Korea's Hanjin Shipping Company, parent company of Korean Airlines, was heavily involved in the redevelopment of Navoi Airport in Uzbekistan. (Note: Uzbekistan will not allow Hanjin to fly cargo from Navoi into Afghanistan. Hanjin has therefore found it necessary, and thinks it profitable, to help improve the road to Kabul.) Yu further pointed out that there were many ethnic Koreans working in Uzbekistan. He added that ROK President Lee Myung-bak would be visiting Uzbekistan on May 10.

16. (C) SRAP Holbrooke welcomed the ROK public and private sector initiatives Yu had outlined, noting that they were a perfect fit with our own strategy of putting more troops into Southern and Eastern Afghanistan, while asking other countries to contribute more to the development of Northern and Western Afghanistan. He praised a map the Deputy Foreign Minister's office had produced that depicts those activities. He suggested President Lee share it and describe the ROK's activities in the region with President Obama when they meet for the U.S.-ROK Summit on June 16.

ROK PLEDGE TO THE PAKISTAN DONORS' CONFERENCE

17. (C) Turning to Pakistan, SRAP Holbrooke stressed the importance of international assistance to further stabilize that fractured country. He thanked FM Yu for his decision to attend the April 17 Pakistan Donor's Conference in Tokyo, and asked about the pledge he would be making. Yu replied that the ROKG intended to pledge a combined total of USD 200 million ("with some room for more later"). That would consist of USD 160 in soft loans the ROK had previously pledged to the Government of Pakistan (ref A), as well as a new pledge of an additional USD 40 million that MOFAT officials later said would consist of USD 20 million in soft loans and USD 20 million in grant aid.

18. (C) SRAP Holbrooke explained the serious nature of the problems facing Pakistan, shared with FM Yu that Chinese Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi had expressed very similar concerns, and informed FM Yu that the USG and Japan would be pledging USD 1 billion each. Holbrooke strongly urged Yu to meet with the President and Foreign Minister of Pakistan in Tokyo and to offer them as much assistance as possible.

FOLLOWING UP IN SEOUL, TOKYO, AND WASHINGTON

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19. (SBU) At the conclusion of their meeting, SRAP Holbrooke and FM Yu agreed that the embassy would continue working closely with MOFAT as the ROKG developed the details of its

assistance packages for Afghanistan and Pakistan. Holbrooke also invited the Minister or Deputy Foreign Minister Lee to receive a full briefing on the new U.S. strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan during their next visit to Washington.

MEETING WITH PRESIDENT LEE

¶10. (C) SRAP Holbrooke told President Lee Myung-bak in a warm meeting that he had included a visit to Korea in his first trip to Asia as Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan because he wanted to underline how vital Korea's contributions were for both countries. He added that Korea's contribution at the Tokyo Donor's Conference for Pakistan would be very important. Holbrooke explained that President Obama regarded Pakistan as an even more critical problem than Afghanistan, and would want to hear from President Lee directly on Korean assistance to both countries, as well as about its activities in Uzbekistan and other parts of Central Asia, during the Presidents' June 16 meeting.

¶11. (C) President Lee replied that he appreciated that Pakistan and Afghanistan were very difficult challenges. He praised the fact that the USG review of the situation took into account both countries at once, since both had to be dealt with jointly, noting the danger inherent in Pakistan's possession of nuclear weapons. Lee said that the recent fatal attack on Korean tourists in Yemen had reminded Koreans of the dangers of terrorism.

¶12. (C) Noting that he would visit Uzbekistan on May 10, Lee mentioned the ROK commercial effort to establish a transportation corridor from Uzbekistan to northern Afghanistan, originating from a Korea Airlines' freight facility at Navoi Airport, as FM Yu had mentioned. Holbrooke replied that General Petraeus was trying to establish an alternate supply route to the dangerous road from Pakistan, and that President Obama would also be interested in hearing about Korean efforts to help open up relatively safe, northern Afghanistan. He suggested that as a complementary effort, the ROK consider helping Afghanistan re-establish commercial agriculture for export, which could be flown to the South Korean market if commercially viable.

¶13. (C) SRAP Holbrooke suggested, and President Lee agreed, that it would be helpful for DFM Lee Yong-joon to travel to Washington for detailed discussions of possible Korean activities in Pakistan and Afghanistan before the Presidential meeting in June. Holbrooke emphasized that such discussions could lead to significant deliverables for the

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Presidential meeting.

¶14. (C) Finally, SRAP Holbrooke told President Lee, as he had the Foreign Minister, that the USG was not asking the ROK to send troops to Afghanistan, and was instead seeking greater economic assistance to Pakistan and Afghanistan. He added that it would be particularly helpful for the ROKG to contribute to the Afghanistan Army Trust Fund. President Lee closed the meeting by saying that President Obama's determination to address Pakistan and Afghanistan together with allies would ensure success. He added that the ROK would lend a helping hand to U.S. efforts within its limitations.

EMBASSY POC

¶15. (SBU) Post has designated David Jeffrey in the POL-MIL unit as our primary point of contact as we move forward with the ROKG on the further development and implementation of their planned and pledged assistance to Afghanistan and

Pakistan. Post requests POC information for SRAP's staff regarding Korea issues.

¶16. (SBU) SRAP Ambassador Holbrooke has cleared this message.
STEPHENS